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Amendment

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REMARKS

The Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration of the application, and for deeming claim 4 allowable if rewritten in independent form incorporating the limitations of the claims from which it depends.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, 16, 17, and 18 were rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,537,516 (Sherman et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,606,167 (Rees et al.). Claims 3 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherman in view of Rees and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,462,835 (Loushin et al.). Claims 6, 7, 14, and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherman in view of Rees and further in view of U.S. Application Publication No. U.S. 2004/0160641A1 (Kohler et al.) Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherman in view of Rees and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,178,007 (Harrington). Claims 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherman in view of Rees and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,995,714 (Hadley et al.). Claim 4 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but was deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of Claim 3 and Claim 4, and the Applicants therefore believe that Claim 1 is now in condition for allowance. Claims 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8, which depend from Claim 1, should also be in condition for allowance. Claims 3, 4, and 9 – 20 have been canceled.

With regard to the subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner, the applicant agrees with the Examiner's conclusions regarding patentability,

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without necessarily agreeing with or acquiescing in the Examiner's reasoning. In particular, the applicant believes that the remaining claims in the application are allowable because the prior art fails to teach, anticipate or render obvious the invention as claimed, independent of how the invention is paraphrased.


Thus, the Applicants believe that the application is now in condition for allowance, and favorable action by the Examiner is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Hewlett-Packard Company
18110 SE 34th St.
Vancouver, WA 98683
360-212-0769

Yifeng Wu et al.

By:


Larry D. Baker
Attorney/Agent for Applicant(s)
Reg. No. 39,593